

Web Site Development: How to Create and Maintain a Web Site for Your Center



Objectives

You will learn how:

- ◆ To create a Web site at no cost to your center.
 - Neighborhood Networks Web site creation tool.
- ◆ To hire a company to create your Web site.
- ◆ To create a Web site yourself at some cost to your center.
 - Buying a domain name.
 - Purchasing hosting for your Web site.
 - Helpful tools to create your Web site.
 - How to effectively market your Web site.
- ◆ To perform maintenance on your Web site.
 - Keep your site content and links current.

Key Points

- ◆ Assess the no-cost tools available.
- ◆ Strategies for Web site creation and maintenance.
- ◆ Models of successful center Web sites.



Program Development Materials

Developing a Web Site

Creating a Web Site at No Cost to Your Center

Creating a Web Site at No Cost To Your Center

No Cost

Hire A Company

Do It Yourself

Marketing

Maintaining

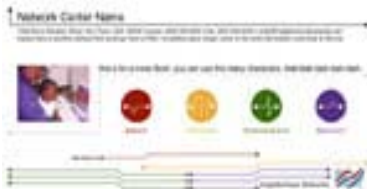
The Neighborhood Networks Web Site Creation Tool provides you with:

- A link to your site
- The hosting for your site
- Templates to enter content and images
- A request process that creates your Web site automatically for you
- An administrative view that allows you to easily make changes to your site

One option is create a Web site for your center. The Neighborhood Networks Web site creation tool is located on the Neighborhood Networks Web site at www.neighborhoodnetworks.org.

This is a free tool that allows you to create a Web site for your center by choosing from one of the three templates that the tool provides.

Template 1



Template 2



Template 3



Once you choose a template and complete the five required steps for this tool, you can request a Web site from Neighborhood Networks. This request will be processed on receipt and should take between 24 and 48 hours. Once your request is processed, you will receive via e-mail a link to your Web site.

One example of a center Web site created with this tool can be found at www-domino4.hud.gov/NN/centersite/pacecenter.nsf/uniqueid/Homepage

There are some limitations to this tool, such as the inability to have database interaction with your site. Sites created with this tool are only provided with six pages, including the homepage. In addition, the links on your homepage are already provided for you and cannot be changed: About, Services, News/Events, Contact/Feedback, and Search.

However, the Web site creation tool also has many benefits. It is free. It provides you with a link to your site, and all Web sites created with this tool have an administrative page that allows you to maintain the content and links on your site.

Hire a Company to Create Your Web Site

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- Prepare a site outline
- Determine how many pages you need
- Determine what your menu will be

If you choose to hire a company to create your Web site, there are a few things you need to do. Visit their Web site. Does the site work? Do you like what you see in the portfolio? Is the text written in clear, error-free English? Does it fit your style?

The most important element of your Web site launch is the rapport you develop with your Web site designer. You are going to spend a lot of time talking and e-mailing back and forth, so it is vital that you find a designer that you like.

Prepare a Site Outline

The best Web site designer cannot create something from nothing. It is up to you to have some idea of what your site is about and how many pages it should be. Here is an easy way to do this that does not require any technical knowledge. Get out a pencil and some paper and write down each section of your Web site. For example, let's say you want a Web site to sell your handmade rugs. You could divide it up like this: 1) pictures of rugs to purchase, 2) information about me with a picture, 3) information about my shop with a picture, 4) information about the history of rug making, 5) a main page that tells a little bit about everything.

By doing this exercise, you accomplished two things without realizing it: You figured out how many pages you need. This is very important because many designers charge by the number of

pages. You figured out what your menu will be: buy rugs, about me, my shop, history of rug making, home, etc.

Keep in mind that you will have to provide all the text that appears on your Web site. Designers will transfer your text, but designers do not write your content for you. Writing content is the client's responsibility. It is also your responsibility to provide pictures. If you are selling rugs, you will need pictures of rugs. Naturally, if you also want to add stock photos, a good design company should be able to provide them.

Web Hosting

**Hiring a Company to
Create a Web Site (continued)**

Web Hosting

- If a web design company creates your site, it should be able to offer you a hosting package

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Once your Web site has been created, the digital files have to reside somewhere so that people can access them on the Internet. This is called Web hosting or simply hosting. Any reputable Web site design company will offer you a hosting service as part of their package. Expect to pay between \$20 and \$70 a month for hosting, depending on what kind of site you have. Also expect to pay for at least the first 3 months in advance.

What Does a Web Site Designer Charge?

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Hiring a Company to Create a Web Site (continued)

Web Designer Charges

- Everyone charges different rates based on experience, type of project, schedules, etc.
- The price is whatever the designer says it is. Rates are often based on the number of pages and can range from \$50 to \$1,000 per page

Like any other industry, you get what you pay for. Everyone charges a different rate based on experience, type of project, schedules, and so on. The price is whatever the designer says it is. Rates are often based on the number of pages and can range anywhere from \$50 to \$1,000 per page depending on the type of project. If someone offers to design a site for \$50 a page, make sure you look at his or her portfolio. Have you ever seen one of those Web sites that has a black background with big neon buttons that spin around and blink? Those are the kind of pages you get for \$50. If you are investing in your online presence, you do not want to go cheap. Naturally, everyone has a budget. But you should not let price be the only factor, and please do not expect something for nothing. Web site design and programming are creative, labor-intensive tasks. A good designer, like any seasoned professional, charges a fair price.

Monthly Maintenance

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Hiring a Company to Create a Web Site (continued)

Monthly Maintenance

- You do not need a completely new site every week, but you should be rotating pictures, updating information, and adding features on a regular basis
- This is why you should retain your designer for maintenance

Once your Web site is launched, it must be maintained. If your Web site does not change, why should people go back? You do not need a completely new site every week, but you should be rotating pictures, updating information and adding features on a regular basis. Many of today's most popular sites change hourly. That is why you should retain your designer to do maintenance. Most design companies will offer to do a certain amount of work each month for a set fee, or they might simply do maintenance for an hourly rate. You should inquire about it up front.

Contracts

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Hiring a Company to Create a Web Site (continued)

Contracts

- Insist that a contract, clearly stating the following, is signed by both parties:
 - All fees
 - All timetables

Once you have found a Web site design company that you like and you have agreed on a general price, insist that a contract be signed by both parties. It is critical that you know exactly what the company is going to do and the company needs to inform you of your role as well. All fees and timetables should be clearly stated. Make sure you know how the design company is going to react when you start asking for changes once the process is under way.

The Design Process

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Hiring a Company to Create a Web Site (continued)

The design process

- Provide the designer with a list of at least three sites similar to the look and feel that you desire

Beware of the Web site designer who does not ask for your input before designing your site. Be prepared to spend some time either in person, via e-mail, or on the phone discussing things like colors, text, programming features, and navigation. You should provide the designer with a list of at least three sites that are similar to the look and feel that you desire.

Creating a Web Site Yourself at Some Cost

If you are comfortable with computers, with patience you can learn to create and maintain a simple site yourself. Doing it yourself may cost a little less; however, it will take you longer if you need to learn how to use some new tools and techniques.

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Creating a Web Site Yourself

If you want to create or edit a Web site yourself, you will need:

- Access to a computer where you can install software and store files
- Instruction from tutorials on the Web or from books
- An idea of the basic elements for your site
- Software for your computer
- A host for your Web pages, if you do not yet have a Web site

If you want to create or edit a Web site yourself, you will need:

- ☐ Access to a computer, where you can install software and store files.
- ☐ Tutorials on the Web or books can help you create your first Web site.
- ☐ An idea of basic site elements (they will be defined in a subsequent section of this presentation).
- ☐ Design software.
- ☐ A host for your Web pages, if you do not already have one.

Basic Elements for Your Site

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- What's New
- About Us
- Site Map
- Contact/Feedback
- Search

Software

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- Macromedia: Dreamweaver \$299
- Adobe: GoLive \$290
- NetObjects: Fusion \$280
- Adobe: PageMill \$90
- Claris: Home Page \$99
- Microsoft: FrontPage \$140
- Netscape: Composer is included free with Netscape
- Microsoft: Word has some very basic HTML capabilities

- Some design software to consider are:
- Macromedia Dreamweaver (\$299)
 - Adobe GoLive (\$290)

- NetObjects Fusion (\$280)
- Adobe PageMill (\$90)
- Claris Home Page (\$99)
- Microsoft FrontPage (\$140)
- Netscape Composer (included free with Netscape Communicator)
- Microsoft Word (has some very basic HTML capabilities)

Finding a Host for Your Web Site

Hosting

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Some of the popular hosting companies are:

- Verisign (www.verisign.com)
- Hostek (www.hostek.com)
- Verio (www.verio.com)

Once your Web site has been created, the digital files have to reside somewhere so that people can access them on the Internet. This is called Web hosting or simply hosting. If a professional created the site for you, that person will probably arrange the hosting. However, if you create your Web site, expect to pay between \$20 and \$70 dollars a month for hosting depending on what kind of site you have. Also expect to pay for at least the first 3 months in advance. Some popular companies that will purchase a domain name and host for your Web site are:

- ☐ Verisign
www.verisign.com
- ☐ Hostek
www.hostek.com
- ☐ Verio
www.verio.com

ISP

ISPs

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Some of the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) that provide free Web site space if you have an account:

- America Online (www.aol.com)
- Geocities (<http://geocities.yahoo.com>)
- Tripod (www.tripod.com)

If your center has a dial-up Internet account, you probably have some Web space that came with it and you can use that. Some Internet service providers provide free space but require you to carry advertisements. Contact your Internet service provider for more information about creating a Web site with the space that they provide. Some well-known Internet service providers that offer Web space to their customers are:

- ☐ America Online
www.aol.com
- ☐ Geocities
<http://geocities.yahoo.com>
- ☐ Tripod
www.tripod.lycos.com

Marketing Your Site

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Marketing Your Site

- Yahoo (www.yahoo.com)
- LookSmart (www.looksmart.com)
- AltaVista (www.altavista.com)
- Netscape (www.netscape.com)
- Lycos (www.lycos.com)
- WebCrawler (www.webcrawler.com)
- Google (www.google.com)
- Infoseek (www.infoseek.com)
- Excite (www.excite.com)
- HotBot (www.hotbot.com)

Announce your center's new Web site everywhere on the Web you can, especially major search engines: Yahoo, AltaVista, Lycos, Google, Excite, LookSmart, Netscape Open Directory, WebCrawler, Infoseek, and HotBot. Visit each of these sites for instructions:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yahoo
www.yahoo.com | <input type="checkbox"/> LookSmart
www.looksmart.com |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AltaVista
www.altavista.com | <input type="checkbox"/> Netscape
www.netscape.com |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lycos
www.lycos.com | <input type="checkbox"/> WebCrawler
www.webcrawler.com |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Google
www.google.com | <input type="checkbox"/> Infoseek
www.infoseek.com |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excite
www.excite.com | <input type="checkbox"/> HotBot
www.hotbot.com |

Find Web sites related to your area of interest and ask their Webmasters to link to your site. Many sites will do that for free, especially if you reciprocate. With so many new sites coming online, this should be an ongoing process.

Maintaining Your Site

Maintaining Your Site

Changes or additions that you make to existing pages or directories could affect the entire site, particularly:

- Images
- Links

No Cost

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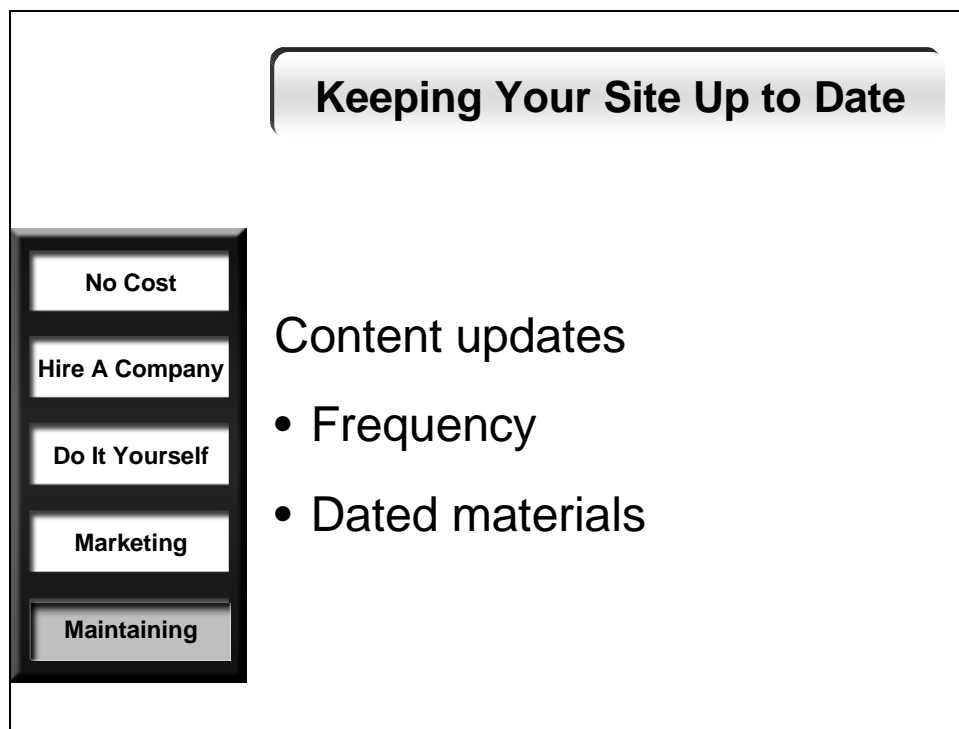
Do It Yourself

Marketing

Maintaining

Since Web pages and graphics are linked in specific ways, any changes or additions that you make to existing pages or directories could affect the entire site. The most common result is that links are broken, images get mixed up, or pages do not load properly. User feedback, usually via e-mail, can play a big part in flagging these types of problems so they can be resolved in a timely manner. Maintenance for a small site may take as little as 2 to 3 hours a month.

Keeping Your Site Up to Date



Updating a site means changing the site's content. If you have small site this could mean simply checking links to other sites to make sure they are current. The resources and cost of keeping a Web site current for a small site should be relatively low depending on the frequency of updates.

Some kinds of dated materials like success stories can be useful and should be archived. Make sure that archived information is organized in a way that is easy to access. Another simple way of letting users know that you have updated your site or specific pages is to add a notation at the bottom of your web pages that includes the date that the page was last modified.

Maintenance Strategies

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Maintaining

- How often do you update your site?
- How many visitors is your site getting?
- Can users provide you with feedback about your site?

Start by deciding how often you need or want to update your site and how extensive those updates will be. Determine approximately how many people are visiting your site and what pages they are visiting. There are ways of tracking which parts of your site are being frequented. If a Web hosting service hosts your site, it should supply you with detailed and timely reports.

Make sure that your Web site provides a way for users to contact you to give feedback on your site. The most common method is via e-mail. Use the information that you receive from users to identify and correct technical problems in a timely manner. Use comments about the site to guide your decisions about what content to change.

Successful Neighborhood Networks Center Web Sites

Successful Center Web Sites (continued)

- Friendship Village Neighborhood Network in Virginia Beach, VA
(www.whro.org/friendship)
- St. Peter Manor in Memphis, TN
(www.mecca.org/~mpatton/stpeter.html)

Neighborhood Networks centers are making themselves more accessible online by creating their own Web sites. Many centers are already linked to the national Neighborhood Networks Web site. Among them:

- ❑ Glenridge Terrace Computer Learning Center
Medford, Oregon
www.southc.com/glenridge
- ❑ LaGrave Place Neighborhood Learning Center
Grand Forks, North Dakota
www.lagrave.com
- ❑ Friendship Village Neighborhood Network
Virginia Beach, Virginia
www.whro.org/friendship
- ❑ Island Grove Neighborhood Networks
Greeley, Colorado
www.islandgrove.org
- ❑ St. Peter Manor
Memphis, Tennessee
www.mecca.org/~mpatton/stpeter.html

The Neighborhood Networks Web site provides a good resource for centers interested in creating their own Web sites. The national Web site features links to various sites that explain how to develop a Web site.

The Neighborhood Networks Web site is located at www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org.



Activity

Activity

Let's take a tour of the Neighborhood Networks Web site. On this site you can find many resources that could benefit your center, such as current news, funding and partnership materials, publications, and other resources for centers.

This tour will not only go through the resources available to centers, it will also include a demonstration of the Web site creation tool mentioned in the "Creating a Web Site at No Cost to Your Center" section of our presentation.

What Do You Think?

Please let us know what you thought of our workshop.

- ◆ Was it informative?
- ◆ Was there something you had hoped you would learn that was not mentioned?
- ◆ Do you have any comments or suggestions that we include for our future workshops?

Thank You

Thank you for attending the Neighborhood Networks workshop on Web site development and maintenance. We hope that you have learned some valuable information that will be of use when promoting your center online, and we welcome questions at this time.



Online Resources

Online Resources

- *Web Site Authoring Tools—
The How To Library*
[http://hotwired.lycos.com/
webmonkey/authoring/tools/](http://hotwired.lycos.com/webmonkey/authoring/tools/)
- *Creating Your First Web Site—
Using Netscape*
[http://home.netscape.com/
communicator/creatingsites.html](http://home.netscape.com/communicator/creatingsites.html)

Web Site Authoring Tools—The How-To Library
hotwired.lycos.com/webmonkey/authoring/tools/

This resource gives information on tools such as FrontPage and Dreamweaver that can assist you in creating your own Web site.

Creating Your First Web Site—Using Netscape
home.netscape.com/communicator/creatingsites.html

This Web site provides instructions and tools to help in creating your first Web site. Most of the tools on this site are free and can be very helpful in creating a Web site without knowing HTML.

Online Resources (continued)

- *Show Me The HTML—Beginning Tips*
www.unplug.com/great/
- *An Introduction to Page Design*
http://info.med.yale.edu/caim/manual/pages/page_design.html
- *How to Create a Web Site—Tutorial*
www.2createawebsite.com/

Show Me the HTML—Beginning Tips

www.unplug.com/great/

This resource provides information how to learn HTML. This site offers tutorials on beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels of HTML coding.

An Introduction to Page Design

info.med.yale.edu/caim/manual/pages/page_design.html

This Web site gives information how the design of your site effects your users. This resource can be very helpful when designing your user interface.



Presenters Biographies

April King (Los Angeles, Washington, D.C.) is a senior Web specialist with Aspen Systems Corporation, with approximately 5 years of experience in the IT industry. She oversees creation, updating, and maintenance of, as well as information collection for, databases and the Web site for the Neighborhood Networks contract. These site updates require HTML coding, meeting ADA Section 508 standards, Internet-related development, and other technology. As a Web specialist, King handles MS Access and Lotus Notes database creation. Her background includes systems management and Web development using Cold Fusion, Asp, VB Script, JavaScript, HTML, DHTML, and SQL. She has worked for contractors, corporations, and governments, including the Washington Metro Area Transit Authority, Fairfax County Department of Technology, American Management Systems, and Verizon.

Stacey Jones-Speight is a senior manager, information systems, for Aspen Systems. She is responsible for the development and maintenance of more than 20 Web-based and client/server projects applications for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Jones-Speight is responsible for technical management of HUD's Neighborhood Networks project. She is responsible for marketing, proposal preparation, planning, definition, design, development, testing, implementation, training, and maintenance of system solutions. Jones-Speight is responsible for system modification and testing activities to ensure that Web-based projects are Section 508 compliant. She is fluent in Lotus Notes/Domino, Active Server Pages, BroadVision, SQL-Server, VB, Oracle, HTML, Access Basic, Perl-CGI, C, C++, COBOL, PLI, IMS, FORTRAN, and INFORMIX 4GL.